

CHAPTER 9

Al-Barâ'at: The Immunity

(REVEALED AT MADÎNAH: 16 *sections*; 129 *verses*)

The title of this chapter is taken from the opening statement, which contains a declaration of *immunity* from obligations with such of the idolatrous tribes as had repeatedly broken their engagements. This declaration is one of the most important events in the history of Islâm, for hitherto the Muslims had constantly suffered from the hostility of the unscrupulous idolatrous tribes who had no regard for their treaties, dealing a blow at the Muslims whenever they had an opportunity of doing so. The chapter is known under various other names, *al-Taubah* or *Repentance*, being the best known. This is not really a new chapter, and this accounts for the *Bismillâh* being omitted from the opening. It is admittedly a part of the last chapter, while a distinct name has been assigned to it by reason of the importance of the declaration of *immunity*, from which it takes its name. A reference to the seventh and the eighth sections of the last chapter will show that the idolaters repeatedly broke the agreements which bound them to remain on peaceful terms with the Muslims. This frequent violation ultimately led to the declaration of immunity, because it was impossible that the Muslims should be bound forever by the terms of those agreements, while their enemies could repudiate them with impunity.

A declaration of immunity necessitated by the repeated treaty violations of the idolaters is made in the first section, with two clear exceptions; one in the case of those tribes who had remained true to their obligations, and a second in the case of idolaters who sought protection from the Muslims. These latter were to be conducted safely to their tribes, and were not to be molested in any way. The second section gives the chief reason for freeing the Muslims from the liabilities of certain agreements, again stating expressly that the Muslims were to stand firm by their agreements so long as the other party adhered to their terms. In the third section the idolaters are told that their pretensions relating to the entertainment of the pilgrims and the repairing or building of the Sacred House could not save them from the consequences of their evil deeds, while the conclusion of that section calls attention to the sacrifices which the Muslims would now be required to make in the cause of truth.

The fourth section states how Islâm was triumphing in Arabia while the fifth, after speaking of the falling off of the Jews and the Christians from the pure monotheism of their great prophets, predicts the final triumph of Islâm, the only *Dîn* of pure monotheism in the whole world. Thenceforward to the end, with the exception of the last three sections, are contained references to the Tabûk expedition, and particularly to those who had been guilty of default in joining that expedition. Thus the hypocrites had made their presence clearly felt among the Muslims from the time of the battle of Uhud, in the third year of the Hijrah, and they had been given a chance up to the close of the ninth year to mend their ways, and the final word with regard to them was now urgently needed. The three concluding sections are a natural sequel to the subject of hypocrisy. The fourteenth speaks of the faithful, and the fifteenth of their duty towards Allâh and His Prophet, their attention being drawn in the closing words of this section to the necessity of proper arrangements for the propagation of the Faith. Thus at the end of a chapter which almost entirely deals with treaty obligations, ultimatums and wars, the faithful are told that every Muslim community must contribute men to carry the message of Truth to the whole world, which was the real object of Islâm. The last section speaks of the Prophet's great anxiety for the hypocrites as well as the believers.

The whole of this chapter was revealed in the ninth year of the Hijrah, the opening verses belonging to the close, and the major portion to about the middle, of that year, during or after the Tabûk expedition, which took place in the month of Rajab in the ninth year of the Hijrah.

SECTION 1: Declaration of Immunity

- 1 A declaration of immunity from Allâh and His Messenger to those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement.^a
- 2 So go about in the land for four months and know that you cannot escape Allâh and that Allâh will disgrace the disbelievers.
- 3 And an announcement from Allâh and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage that Allâh is free from liability to the idolaters, and so is His Messenger. So if you repent, it will be better for you; and if you turn away, then know

that you will not escape Allâh. And announce painful chastisement to those who disbelieve —

4 Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement, then they have not failed you in anything and have not backed up anyone against you; so fulfil their agreement to the end of their term. Surely Allâh loves those who keep their duty.^a

1a. This verse is to be read along with verse 4, which makes a clear exception in favour of those who did not fail in their agreements. It is a fact that the idolatrous tribes of Arabia broke their agreements with the Muslims again and again (8:56), yet the Muslims were enjoined to accept peace if the disbelievers consented to it, even after repeated violations (8:61). But this state of things could not continue long, for it was soon found that it was impossible to trust such neighbours. This repudiation of agreements took place on a large scale when the Muslims were absent on the Tabûk expedition. The first thirteen verses of this chapter were publicly proclaimed by ‘Alî, on the occasion of the pilgrimage in the ninth year of the Hijrah, and the following announcements made as the result: (1) that no idolater shall approach the Sacred House after this; (2) that no one shall go naked round the Ka‘bah (Bukhârî 65: ix, 3). The attitude of the tribes to whom this ultimatum was given through ‘Alî is well indicated in their reply: “O ‘Alî, deliver this message to your cousin (i.e. the Prophet), that we have thrown the agreements behind our backs, and there is no agreement between him and us except smiting with spears and striking with swords” (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

3a. By the day of the greater pilgrimage is meant either the ninth of *Dhu-l-Hijjah*, when all pilgrims gather together in the plain of ‘Arafat, or the tenth when they assemble in Mina.

5 So when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters,^a wherever you find them, and take them captive and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush. But if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free. Surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.^b

6 And if anyone of the idolaters seek your protection, protect him till he hears the word of Allâh, then convey him to his place of safety. This is because they are a people who know not.^a

4a. Only two tribes, the Banî Damrah, and the Banî Kanânah, are related to have adhered to their treaties. The exception given here makes it clear that the Muslims were not fighting with the idolaters on account of their religion, but on account of their having been untrue to their engagements.

5a. The clear exception of the last verse shows that by the idolaters here are meant, not all idolaters or polytheists wherever they may be found in the world, not even all idolaters of Arabia, but only those idolatrous tribes of Arabia assembled at the pilgrimage who had first made agreements with the Muslims and then violated them.

5b. The exception here has given rise to much misconception. It is thought that it offers to the disbelievers the alternative of the sword or the Qur'ân. Nothing is farther from the truth. The injunction contained in the first part of the verse establishes the fact that the whole verse relates to certain idolatrous Arab tribes who had broken their engagements with the Muslims, and who had now been apprised of a similar repudiation by the Muslims. The order to kill them and to make them prisoners and to besiege them and ambush them amounts clearly to an order to fight against them, as it is in war only that all these things are made lawful. They had so often broken their word that they could no more be trusted. Yet, if they joined the brotherhood of Islam, and there was an absolute change in their condition, the punishment which they otherwise deserved could be remitted. It was a case of forgiving a guilty people who had repented. It should also be noted that a mere confession of the faith is not required; what is required is an absolute change, so that the old crimes are all abandoned. Therefore, along with the confession of the faith, it is required that they should keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate. The subject is further clarified in the next verse and the following section.

6a. This verse leaves no doubt that the Prophet was never ordered to kill anyone on account of his religion. "You shall give him a safe conduct that he may return home again securely in case he shall not think fit to embrace Muhammadanism" (Sale).

SECTION 2: Reasons for the Immunity

7 How can there be an agreement for the idolaters with Allâh and with His Messenger, except those with whom you made an agreement at the Sacred Mosque? So as long as they are true to you, be true to them. Surely Allâh loves those who keep their duty.^a

8 How (can it be)? And if they prevail against you, they respect neither ties of relationship nor covenant in your case. They would please you with their mouths while their hearts refuse; and most of them are transgressors.

9 They have taken a small price for the messages of Allâh, so they hinder (human beings) from His way. Surely evil is that which they do.

10 They respect neither ties of relationship nor covenant, in the case of a believer. And these are they who go beyond the limits.^a

11 But if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, they are your brethren in faith. And We make the messages clear for a people who know.

12 And if they break their oaths after their agreement and revile your religion, then fight the leaders of disbelief — surely their oaths are nothing — so that they may desist.^a

7a. So long as the idolaters were true to their agreements, the Muslims were required to be true to them. Just as in the case of war, the Muslims were not allowed to fight until the enemy had first attacked, so, in the case of repudiation of agreements, it was the enemy who first repudiated the agreement.

10a. Note the repeated assertions of the Qur'ân that the disbelievers were not to be fought against for their disbelief but for their being first in starting war or repudiating agreements. No remedy was left for the covert mischief of these people, except that the agreements should be overtly repudiated and a period put to all their mischief.

13 Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and aimed at the expulsion of the Messenger, and they attacked you first? Do you fear them? But Allâh has more right that you should fear Him, if you are believers.

14 Fight them; Allâh will chastise them at your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and relieve the hearts of a believing people,

15 And remove the rage of their hearts.^a And Allâh turns (mercifully) to whom He pleases. And Allâh is Knowing, Wise.

16 Do you think that you would be left alone while Allâh has not yet known those of you who struggle hard and take not anyone as an intimate friend besides Allâh and His Messenger and the believers? And Allâh is Aware of what you do.

SECTION 3: Idolaters' Service of the Sacred House

17 The idolaters have no right to maintain the mosques of Allâh, while bearing witness to disbelief against themselves. These it is whose works are vain; and in the Fire will they abide.^a

12a. Note again, that those leaders of disbelief are to be fought against *who break their oaths after their agreements*.

15a. It is said to refer to the Khuzâ'ah, who, having become Muslims, suffered severely at the hands of the Banî Bakr, assisted by the Quraish; but the reference may as well be to the Muslims in general, who had suffered the severest persecutions at the hands of the disbelievers. The punishment of the persecutors would no doubt relieve the hearts of the believers.

18 Only he can maintain the mosques of Allâh who believes in Allâh and the Last Day, and keeps up prayer and pays the poor-rate and fears none but Allâh. So these it is who may be of the guided ones.

19 Do you hold the giving of drink to the pilgrims and the maintenance of the Sacred Masjid^a equal to (the service of) one who believes in Allâh and the Last Day and strives hard in Allâh's way? They are not equal in the sight of Allâh. And Allâh guides not the iniquitous people.

20 Those who believed and fled (their homes), and strove hard in Allâh's way with their wealth and their lives, are much higher in rank with Allâh. And it is these that shall triumph.

21 Their Rabb gives them good news of mercy and pleasure, from Himself, and Gardens wherein lasting blessings will be theirs,

22 Abiding therein for ever. Surely Allâh has a mighty reward with Him.

17a. By *the Masajids of Allâh* is meant particularly the *Sacred Masjid at Makkah*, as being the centre of all the Masajids of the world. This is made clear by the use of the words *Sacred Masjid* in verse 19 instead of *the Masajids of Allâh*. It had long remained in the hands of the idolaters, who abode therein, visiting and repairing it, having placed a large number of idols within it. With the conquest of Makkah the Sacred Masjid was denuded of all idols, and was now as pure an emblem of monotheism as in the time of Ibrâhîm. Hence the idol-worshippers had nothing to do with it now.

19a. It is generally supposed to refer to ‘Abbâs, the Prophet’s uncle, whose charge was giving drink to pilgrims and guarding the Sacred Masjid. But really a comparison is drawn here between all such minor acts of charity and public utility and the great responsibility of every individual to exert himself to his utmost to establish the Truth.

23 O you who believe, take not your fathers and your brothers for friends if they love disbelief above faith. And whoever of you takes them for friends, such are the wrongdoers.

24 Say: If you’re fathers and your sons and your brethren and your wives and your kinsfolk and the wealth you have acquired, and trade whose dullness you fear, and dwellings you love, are dearer to you than Allâh and His Messenger and striving in His way, then wait till Allâh brings His command to pass. And Allâh guides not the transgressing people.^a

SECTION 4: Islâm made Triumphant in Arabia

25 Certainly Allâh helped you in many battlefields, and on the day of Hunain, when your great numbers made you proud, but they availed you nothing, and the earth with all its spaciousness was straitened for you, then you turned back retreating.^a

24a. A true Muslim may have wealth, may carry on trade, may have magnificent houses, but these should not be dearer to him than Allâh and exertion in His path. In other words, he should be ready to sacrifice all these interests for a higher purpose, before which all these sink into insignificance. The essential difference between the Gospel teaching and the teaching of the Arabic Glorious Qur’ân is that while the former condemns wealth and the amassing of wealth outright, the latter does not require one actually to hate riches, but rather not to be obsessed by wealth to the neglect of one’s higher duties and responsibilities. The acquisition of wealth is not harmful so long as it is not made the real aim of life, but has its proper place as the means to an end.

25a. With the declaration of immunity, there would naturally be an apprehension in the minds of the Muslims that the struggle would grow harder. Hence they are given an assurance of Divine help, amply justified by their previous experience.

The battle of Hunain, fought in the eighth year of the Hijrah in the valley of Hunain, at about three miles from Makkah, differed from the other battles inasmuch as the Muslims here outnumbered the enemy, the tribes of Hawâzin and Thaqîf being about 4,000 strong, while the Muslims are said to have been as many as ten or even twelve thousand. The archers of the enemy were good marksmen, and had occupied strong positions in the mountain passes. The Muslim army, on the other hand, contained two thousand men of Makkah, some of them still adhering to idolatry. Unfortunately this was the advance party of the army, and, unable to face the archers, they – re-treated causing disorder to the whole army. The Prophet, however, led the assault, at first alone, in face of the archers, but was soon joined by others and a victory was obtained, as the next verse shows.

26 Then Allâh sent down His calm upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and sent hosts which you saw not, and chastised those who disbelieved. And such is the reward of the disbelievers.

27 Then will Allâh after this turn mercifully to whom He pleases. And Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.^a

28 O you who believe, the idolaters are surely unclean,^a so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year of theirs.^b And if you fear poverty, then Allâh will enrich you out of His grace, if He please.^c Surely Allâh is Knowing, Wise.

29 Fight those who believe not in Allâh, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which Allâh and His Messenger have forbidden, nor follow the Religion of Truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgement of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.^a

27a. The reference may be to the prisoners of the Hawâzin, who numbered thousands, and who were all set free as an act of favour by the Holy Prophet, or to their ultimately coming over to Islâm.

28a. Because they indulged in evil practices and went naked round the Ka‘bah. Compare 5:90, where idols are declared to be unclean.

28b. The year of the proclamation *i.e.*, the ninth year of the Hijrah.

28c. The importance of Makkah as a commercial centre lay in the fact that the whole of Arabia repaired to it in the season of the pilgrimage, and there carried out important commercial transactions. The prohibition referred to in the first part of the verse could

have been easily foreseen as affecting the commerce, and consequently the prosperity of Makkah, but worldly or business considerations never interfered with the carrying out of the moral reforms of Islâm.

SECTION 5: Islâm will Triumph in the World

30 And the Jews say: Ezra is the son of Allâh; and the Christians say: The Masîḥ is the son of Allâh. These are the words of their mouths.^a They imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before.^b Allâh's curse be on them! How they are turned away!

29a. The last word on the wars with the idolaters of Arabia having been said, this verse introduces the subject of fighting with the followers of the Book. Though the Jews had for a long time assisted the idolatrous Arabians in their struggle to uproot Islâm, the great Christian power, the Roman Empire, had only just mobilized its forces for the subjection of the new *Dîn*, and the Tabûk expedition followed, which constitutes the subject-matter of a large portion of what follows in this chapter. As the object of this Christian power was simply the subjection of the Muslims, the words in which their final vanquishment by the Muslims is spoken of are different from those dealing with the final vanquishment of the idolatrous Arabians. The Qur'ân neither required that the idolaters should be compelled to accept Islâm, nor was it in any way its object to bring the Christians into subjection. On the other hand, the idolaters wanted to suppress Islâm by the sword, and the Christians first moved themselves to bring Muslim Arabia under subjection. The fate of each was, therefore, according to what it intended for the Muslims. The word *jizyah* is derived from *jazâ*, meaning *he gave satisfaction*, and means, according to *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane, *the tax that is taken from the free non-Muslim subjects of the Muslim Government whereby they ratify the compact that ensures them protection*; or, according to *Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû *Hayyân* al-Undlusî, *because it is a compensation for the protection which is guaranteed them, the non-Muslim subjects being free from military service*.

The phrase *'an yad-in* has been explained variously. The word *yad* (lit., *hand*) stands for *power* or *superiority*, the use of the *hand* being the real source of the superiority of man over all other animals, and the apparent meaning of the phrase is *in acknowledgement of your superiority in protecting their lives, etc.* (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû *Hayyân* al-Undlusî). It

may also be added that the permission to fight, as given to the Muslims, is subject to the condition that the enemy should first take up the sword, *Fight in the way of Allâh against those who fight against you* (2:190). The Holy Prophet never overstepped this limit, nor did his followers. He fought against the Arabs when they took up the sword to destroy the Muslims, and he led an expedition against the Christians when the Roman Empire first mobilized its forces with the object of subjugating the Muslims. And so scrupulous was he that, when he found that the enemy had not yet taken the initiative, he did not attack the Roman Empire, but returned without fighting. Later on, however, the Roman Empire, like the Persians, helped the enemies of Islâm and fomented trouble against the newly established Muslim Kingdom, as a result of which both these empires came into conflict with the Muslims and, notwithstanding the fact that both the Persians and the Romans were very powerful nations with unlimited resources and strong military organizations, and that they both tried at one and the same time to subjugate Islâm, the result was what is predicted here in clear words — they were both reduced to a state of subjection by an insignificant nation like the Arabs.

30a. That there was a sect among the Jews who raised Ezra to the dignity of godhead, or son of God, is shown by Muslim historians. *Qasṭalânî* says, in the *Kitâb al-Nikâh*, that there was a party of Jews who held this belief. Nor did the Jews deny this allegation. The Qur’ân, too, mentions it only here in connection with the Christian doctrine, never blaming the Jews directly in the many controversies with them in the earlier chapters, and this shows that the Jewish nation as a whole was not guilty of entertaining this belief. Another explanation of the statement made here is the free use of the word *son*.

Elsewhere the Qur’ân says of the Jews and the Christians that they call themselves *the sons of Allâh and His beloved ones* (5:18), the meaning only being that they considered themselves *special favourites* of the Divine Being. Hence the belief regarding Ezra may be interpreted in the same light, for there is clear evidence that the Talmudists used much exaggerated language concerning him. Among the prophets of Isrâ’îl, Ezra was specially honoured. In Rabbinical literature Ezra was considered “worthy of being the vehicle of the law, had it not been already given through Moses”. “He is regarded and quoted as the type of person most competent and learned in the law. The Rabbis associate his name with several important institutions” (*Jewish Encyclopaedia*).

31 They take their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allâh, and (also) the Masîh, son of Maryam. And they were enjoined that they should serve one Deity only — there is no deity but He. Be He glorified from what they set up (with Him)!^a

32 They desire to put out the light of Allâh with their mouths, and Allâh will allow nothing save the perfection of His light, though the disbelievers are averse.^a

30b. We are here told that the Christian doctrine that Jesus Christ was the son of God was borrowed from earlier pagan people. Recent research has established the fact beyond all doubt. In fact, when St. Paul saw that the Jews would on no account accept Jesus Christ as a messenger of God, he introduced the pagan doctrine of sonship of God into the Christian religion, so that it might become more acceptable to the pagans.

31a. Most of the commentators agree that it does not mean that they took them actually for gods; the meaning is that they followed them blindly in what they enjoined and what they forbade, and therefore they are described as having taken them for lords, on account of attaching to them a Divine dignity. It is related in a hadîth that, when this verse was revealed, ‘Adî ibn Hâtîm, a convert from Christianity, asked the Holy Prophet as to the significance of this verse, for, he said, we did not worship our doctors of law and monks. The Holy Prophet’s reply was: *Was it not that the people considered lawful what their priests declared to be lawful, though it was forbidden by God.* Hâtîm replied in the affirmative. That, the Prophet said, was what the verse meant (*Tirmidhî* 44:9; IJ). Muslims who accord a similar position to their *pîrs* or saints are guilty of the same error.

32a. This is a prophecy of the ultimate triumph of Islâm in face of severe opposition from the Jews and Christians. All opposition to truth, whether based on force or propaganda, is here compared with putting out the Divine light by blowing with the mouth to show that all such attempts would prove futile. The Divine light will be made perfect, by which is meant the triumph of Islâm throughout the world, as the next verse states clearly.

33 He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the *Dîn* of Truth that He may make it prevail over all *other ways of life*,^a though the polytheists are averse.

34 O you who believe, surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely, and hinder (them) from Allâh’s way. And those who hoard up

gold and silver and spend it not in Allâh's way — announce to them a painful chastisement,^a

33a. The prophecy of the ultimate triumph of Islâm in the whole world is repeated thrice in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, in exactly the same words — here and in 48:28 and 61:9. Here as well as in 61:9 it is mentioned in connection with Christianity, while in 48:28, it is mentioned in connection with the Arab opposition to Islâm. In Arabia itself, Islam became triumphant in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. Idolatry was wiped out from the face of the country, while many of the Jews and Christians accepted the *Dîn* of Truth. The Prophet's death, instead of putting any check to the advance of Islâm, was a signal for an unparalleled advance of his religion. The first century of the Muslim era saw, not only vast Christian communities swelling the ranks of Islam, in Egypt, North Africa, Asia Minor, Persia and Central Asia, but also brought to light the amazing fact that Islâm, coming in contact with all the great religions of the world, with Zoroastrianism in Persia, with Buddhism and Hinduism in India and Afghanistan, and with Confucianism in China, conquered the hearts of the followers of every *way of life* and they accepted the message of Truth in vast numbers, so that great Muslim communities sprang up in the whole known world, and the light of Islâm enlightened the whole world from the farthest East to the farthest West.

The reason for this triumph, unprecedented in the history of religion, is not far to seek. It was the *Dîn* of Truth; it presented the whole truth and infused a new life into all people who accepted it, while every other religion presented only partial truth. Every religion accepted this or that prophet, while Islâm accepted all the prophets of the world, and every religion had obscured the great Truth of Divine Unity by mixing up with it some kind of *shirk*, while Islâm presented the purest monotheism. Islâm thus presenting the Perfect Light of Divine Unity and the whole Truth relating to prophethood appealed to every people, and the truth of the words — *He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Dîn of Truth that He may make it prevail over all religions*—shone out in full resplendence. Yet we are told in reliable hadîth that even a greater manifestation of the fulfilment of these words will be witnessed in the latter days when *the Masîh of this ummah* makes his appearance (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Imâm Abû Ja'far Muḥammad *ibn Jarîr* al-Ṭabarî, and *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî). And the final manifestation of this great truth is foreshadowed in the gradual

acceptance of the principles of Islâm throughout the whole world, notwithstanding the fact that the political power of Islâm is at its lowest ebb.

35 On the day when it will be heated in the Fire of hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs will be branded with it: This is what you hoarded up for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard.^a

36 Surely the number of months with Allâh is twelve months by Allâh's ordinance, since the day when He created the *samâwât* and the earth — of these four are sacred. That is the right *dîn*; so wrong not yourselves therein.^a And fight the polytheists all together as they fight you all together.^b And know that Allâh is with those who keep their duty.

37 Postponing (of the sacred month)^a is only an addition in disbelief, whereby those who disbelieve are led astray. They allow it one year and forbid it (another) year that they may agree in the number (of months) which Allâh has made sacred, and thus make lawful what Allâh has forbidden. The evil of their doings is made fair-seeming to them. And Allâh guides not the disbelieving people.

34a. The acquisition of wealth is not disallowed, but the hoarding of it so as not to spend it in the cause of truth and for the welfare of humanity is denounced.

35a. The punishment of an evil is spoken of throughout the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân as similar to the evil. Even in this world, a man feels a torment similar to the nature of the evil in which he indulges. Being branded with the hoarded wealth is thus a fit description of the chastisement of the hoarders.

36a. The allusion here is to the Arab practice of postponing the pilgrimage to a month other than that in which it fell, for which see the next verse. Whether the object was intercalation, in order to make the solar and lunar year tally, or whether a continuous cessation of war for a fourth part of the year was too long, is a disputed point; but such postponement was undoubtedly a great hardship for a majority of the people.

36b. Fighting was prohibited in the sacred months (2:217). Excepting this, the Muslims were told to fight with the idolaters *as* the idolaters fought with them, i.e. since all idolaters united in fighting with the Muslims, the latter, too, should unite in fighting with them.

37a. According to most of the commentators, *nasî'* means *postponement*, and the reference here is to the practice of postponing observance of the sacred month, thus allowing an ordinary month to be observed as sacred and a sacred month to be treated as ordinary. This practice interfered with the security of life which was guaranteed in the sacred months, and is, therefore, denounced. According to others, *nasî'* means *addition* (of a month), and refers to the practice of the intercalation of a month every fourth year. AH prefers the first, and says that the three successive months of *Dhu-l-Qa'dah*, *Dhu-l-Hijjah* and *Muharram* seemed too long for them to refrain from their depredations and bloodshed, and therefore they violated the last of these, keeping sacred instead the next month.

SECTION 6: The Tabûk Expedition

38 O you who believe, what (excuse) have you that when it is said to you, Go forth in Allâh's way, you should incline heavily to earth? Are you contented with this world's life instead of the Hereafter? The provision of this world's life is but little as compared with the Hereafter.^a

39 If you go not forth, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement,^a and bring in your place a people other than you, and you can do Him no harm. And Allâh is Possessor of power over all things.

40 If you help him not, Allâh certainly helped him when those who disbelieved expelled him — he being the second of the two; when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: Grieve not, surely Allâh is with us.^a So Allâh sent down His tranquillity on him and strengthened him with hosts which you saw not, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved. And the word of Allâh, that is the uppermost. And Allâh is Mighty, Wise.

38a. The reference here is to the expedition of Tabûk, which was undertaken in the middle of the ninth year of the Hijrah owing to the threatening attitude of the Roman Emperor. There were many hindrances to the raising of an army sufficient to meet the strong forces of the Roman Empire. The chief of these, as enumerated by *Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakh̄r al-Dîn Râzî, are: (1) a great drought; (2) the length of the journey to the confines of Syria; (3) the ripening of the fruits, which were now ready to be gathered; (4) the intensity of the heat; and (5) the organization

and power of the Roman army. In spite of all these difficulties 30,000 men gathered round the Prophet's banner.

39a. The reference here and in what follows is to certain men, who, while professing belief, hesitated to accept the Prophet's call to get ready for the expedition.

41 Go forth, light and heavy,^a and strive hard in Allâh's way with your wealth and your lives. This is better for you, if you know.

42 Had it been a near gain and a short journey, they would certainly have followed thee, but the hard journey was too long for them.^a And they will swear by Allâh: If we had been able, we would have gone forth with you. They cause their own *nafs* to perish; and Allâh knows that they are liars.

40a. This refers to the Prophet's flight from Makkah, when he was forced to hide himself in a cave called *Thaur*, about three miles from Makkah, with only one companion, Abû Bakr. The believers are told that Allâh saved the Prophet from the hands of his enemies when he had but one companion amidst a whole nation of enemies, and that Allâh would help him now.

Abû Bakr's devotion to the Holy Prophet was so great that the latter chose him to be his "sole companion", *the second of the two*, in that most critical hour of his life. The following account from Muir will explain the reference: "He himself went straightway to the house of Abû Bakr, and after a short consultation ventured the plan for immediate flight. Abû Bakr shed tears of joy; the hour of emigration had at last arrived, and he was to be the companion of the Prophet's journey ... They crept in the shade of the evening through a back window, and escaped unobserved from the southern suburb. Pursuing their way south, and clambering in the dark up the bare and rugged ascent, they reached at last the lofty peak of Mount *Thaur*, distant about an hour and a half from the city, and took refuge in a cavern near its summit ... The sole companion, or in Arabic phraseology *the second of the two*, became one of Abû Bakr's most honoured titles ... Muḥammad and his companion felt it no doubt to be a time of jeopardy. Glancing upwards at a crevice through which the morning light began to break, Abû Bakr whispered: 'What if one were to look through the chink and see us underneath his very feet!' 'Think not thus, Abû Bakr!' said the Prophet, 'We are two, but Allâh is in the midst a third.' "

41a. That is, whether it is easy or difficult for you to proceed or whether you are sufficiently armed or not.

42a. Tabûk was midway between Madînah and Damascus. The Arabs were accustomed to fighting near home; hence, the distance was one of the chief considerations which held back those who were insincere.

SECTION 7: **The Hypocrites**

43 Allâh pardon you!^a Why did you permit them until those who spoke the truth had become manifest to you and you had known the liars?

44 Those who believe in Allâh and the Last Day ask not leave of thee (to stay away) from striving hard with their wealth and their persons. And Allâh is Knower of those who keep their duty.

45 They alone ask leave of you who believe not in Allâh and the Last Day, and their hearts are in doubt, so in their doubt they waver.

46 And if they had intended to go forth, they would certainly have provided equipment for it; but Allâh did not like their going forth. So He withheld them, and it was said: Hold back with those who hold back.

47 Had they gone forth with you, they would have added to you naught but trouble, and would have hurried to and fro among you seeking (to sow) dissension among you. And among you there are those who would listen to them. And Allâh well knows the wrongdoers.^a

43a. *‘Afa-llâhu ‘an-ka* (lit., *Allâh pardon you*), does not convey the significance of pardon of sins; it is rather the equivalent of *Allâh bless you!* Or *may Allâh set your affairs aright!* In previous battles, too, the hypocrites always stayed away, offering one excuse or another. But the Divine purpose in this last expedition of the Prophet was to bring about a clear distinction, and to clean the Muslim society of the hypocritical element thoroughly. Such a distinction was really brought about later on as vv. 83, 84 point out, the Prophet being told there that all devotional relations with the hypocrites were to be cut off.

48 Certainly they sought (to sow) dissension before, and they devised plots against you till the Truth came, and Allâh’s command prevailed, though they did not like (it).

49 And among them is he who says: Excuse me and try me not. Surely into trial have they already fallen, and truly hell encompasses the disbelievers.

50 If good befalls you, it grieves them; and if hardship afflicts you, they say: Indeed we had taken care of our affair before. And they turn away rejoicing.

51 Say: Nothing will afflict us save that which Allâh has ordained for us. He is our Patron; and on Allâh let the believers rely.

52 Say: Do you wait for us but one of two most excellent things? And we wait for you that Allâh will afflict you with chastisement from Himself or by our hands. So wait; we too are waiting with you.^a

53 Say: Spend willingly or unwillingly, it will not be accepted from you. Surely you are a transgressing people.

47a. These verses were revealed during the journey to Tabûk, where most of the hypocrites themselves were not present. But a few had accompanied the expedition to inform others of their party of the happenings on the way.

52a. The two most excellent things are, the laying down of life in the cause of Truth, or being sharer in the ultimate triumph of Truth. The Muslims never thought that they could be defeated. They would either die defending the cause of Truth or live and conquer. The only punishment that the hypocrites received from the hands of the Muslims was that they were named and asked to leave the mosque (IJ). Otherwise their liberty was not interfered with. There is mention of one of them living in Madînah to the time of ‘Uthmân, the third Caliph, in full enjoyment of his rights as a citizen; the only distinctive treatment mentioned of him is that the poor-rate was not accepted from him by the Holy Prophet, or by his three immediate successors. See also the next verse.

54 And nothing hinders their contributions being accepted from them, except that they disbelieve in Allâh and in His Messenger and they come not to prayer except as lazy people, and they spend not but while they are reluctant.

55 Let not then neither their wealth nor their children excite thine admiration. Allâh only wishes to chastise them therewith in this world’s life and (that) their *nafs* may depart while they are disbelievers.^a

56 And they swear by Allâh that they are truly of you. And they are not of you, but they are a people who are afraid.

57 If they could find a refuge or caves or a place to enter, they would certainly have turned thereto, running away in all haste.

58 And of them are those who blame you in the matter of the alms. So if they are given thereof, they are pleased, and if they are not given thereof, lo! They are enraged.

59 And if they were content with that which Allâh and His Messenger gave them, and had said: Allâh is sufficient for us; Allâh will soon give us (more) out of His grace and His Messenger too: surely to Allâh we make petition.

55a. The hypocrites experienced earthly torture about their property and children for two reasons: (1) because, avowing their belief in Islâm, they had to take some share in its defensive expeditions and thus spend part of their property, unwillingly though it was, in the cause of Islâm; (2) the children of many of them were true believers, and they knew that after their death their property and their children were to become a source of strength to the very *Dîn* which they tried to extirpate.

SECTION 8: **The Hypocrites**

60 (Zakât) charity is only for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer it, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth), and (to free) the captives, and those in debt, and in the way of Allâh and for the wayfarer — an ordinance from Allâh. And Allâh is Knowing, Wise.^a

61 And of them are those who molest the Prophet and say, He is (all) ear.^a Say: A hearer of good for you — he believes in Allâh and believes the faithful, and is a mercy for those of you who believe. And those who molest the Messenger of Allâh, for them is a painful chastisement.

60a. That by *sadaqât* in the opening of the verse is meant the *obligatory charity*, called *zakât*, and not voluntary alms, is shown by the concluding words of the verse, which call it *an ordinance* from Allâh. The verse defines the objects for which the poor-rate may be spent. Altogether eight heads of expenditure are recognized. There are the poor, or those in straitened circumstances; then there are the needy, by which are meant people who need some help to enable them to earn their living. Poor students and craftsmen or business men without sufficient means are included in this category. Thirdly, there are the collectors of *zakât* and other people employed to

administer the funds. This shows that the institution was meant for raising a public fund, whose management should entirely be in the hands of a public body. The Qur'ân does not recognize it as a private charity. It is sad to note that, as the Qur'ân would have it, the institution of *zakât* is entirely neglected by the Muslims. In the fourth class are people whose hearts are made to incline to Truth. With respect to the preaching of a religion there is always a class which is ready to listen but the carrying of the message of Truth to them needs funds. There are also people who may need help, if they accept the Truth. Expenses in this connection are recognized here as a part of the necessary expenditure of poor-rate. The fifth head relates to the freeing of the prisoners of war. Islam thus laid down a permanent basis for the abolition of slavery. The sixth class is that of debtors — people who incur debts for right purposes. Islâm requires all the members of the society to live in a free atmosphere, and those burdened with debt must therefore be freed of their burdens. Squanderers of wealth are, however, not included in this category. The seventh head is in general words, *fî sabîl Allâh*, or in the way of Allâh. Some limit the significance of these words to warriors (fighting in defence of faith and the community), or those who are engaged in propagating Islâmic truths, while others think that the words are general and include every charitable purpose. The eighth head is that of wayfarers, people who are stranded in a country, to whatever religion or nation they may belong.

61a. The word *udhun*, lit., *an ear*, is applied to *one who hears and believes everything that is said to him*, “as though by reason of the excess of his listening he were altogether the organ of hearing, like as a spy is termed ‘*ain*’ (lit., *eye*) (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). The hypocrites made various derogatory remarks concerning the Prophet, saying among other things, that he was a man who believed everything that he heard, and they were therefore sure that they would make him believe their hypocritical professions. Rodwell is wrong when he says in his note on this word that *udhun* means *injure*. Palmer has also made a mistake here. The error is due to the confusion of the word with *adh-an*, which is quite a different word, being from the root *adhâ*.

62 They swear by Allâh to you to please you; and Allâh — as well as His Messenger — has a greater right that they should please Him, if they are believers.^a

63 Know they not that whoever opposes Allâh and His Messenger, for him is the Fire of hell to abide in it? That is the grievous abasement.

64 The hypocrites fear lest a chapter should be sent down concerning them, telling them plainly of what is in their hearts. Say: Go on mocking, surely Allâh will bring to light what you fear.

65 And if you ask them, they would certainly say: We were only talking idly and sporting. Say: Was it Allâh and His messages and His Messenger that you mocked?

66 Make no excuse, you disbelieved after your believing. If We pardon a party of you, We shall chastise a party, because they are guilty.^a

62a. Though Allâh and His Messenger are both mentioned together, the duty of the faithful is here said to be to please *Him*, i.e. Allâh alone.

66a. History shows that most of the hypocrites ultimately repented and sincerely joined the ranks of the faithful.

SECTION 9: **The Hypocrites**

67 The hypocrites, men and women, are all alike. They enjoin evil and forbid good and withhold their hands. They have forsaken Allâh, so He has forsaken them. Surely the hypocrites are the transgressors.

68 Allâh promises the hypocrites, men and women, and the disbelievers the Fire of hell to abide therein. It is enough for them. And Allâh curses them, and for them is a lasting chastisement.

69 Like those before you — they were stronger than you in power and had more wealth and children. So they enjoyed their portion; thus have you enjoyed your portion as those before you enjoyed their portion, and you indulge in idle talk as they did. These are they whose works are null in this world and the Hereafter, and these are they who are the losers.

70 Has not the story reached them of those before them — of the people of Nûh and ‘Ad and Thamûd, and the people of Ibrâhîm and the dwellers of Midian and the overthrown cities? Their messengers came to them with clear arguments. So Allâh wronged them not but they wronged themselves.

71 And the believers, men and women, are friends one of another. They enjoin good and forbid evil and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, and obey Allâh and His Messenger. As for these, Allâh will have mercy on them. Surely Allâh is Mighty, Wise.

72 Allâh has promised to the believers, men and women, Gardens, wherein flow rivers, to abide therein, and goodly dwellings in Gardens of perpetual abode. And greatest of all is Allâh's goodly pleasure. That is the grand achievement.

SECTION 10: The Hypocrites

73 O Prophet, strive hard against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be firm against them. And their abode is hell, and evil is the destination.^a

74 They swear by Allâh that they said nothing. And certainly they did speak the word of disbelief, and disbelieved after their Islâm, and they purposed that which they could not attain.^a And they sought revenge only because Allâh — as well as His Messenger — had enriched them out of His grace.^b So if they repent, it will be good for them; and if they turn away, Allâh will chastise them with a painful chastisement in this world and the Hereafter; and they shall have in the earth neither a friend nor a helper.

73a. *Jâhada* signifies *he strove* or *exerted himself*, and *jihad* is *the using one's utmost power in contending with an object of disapprobation* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). It is in a secondary sense that the word signifies *fighting*, and it is repeatedly used in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân in its primary significance. It is a fact that those who professed Islâm were never fought against, even though their professions were insincere — as on this occasion and on the occasion of the battle of Uhûd. "The correct rendering is that *jihad* signifies *striving*, or *exerting* oneself, and there is nothing in the word to indicate that this *striving* is to be effected by the sword or by the tongue or by any other method" (*Al-Tafsîr al-Kabîr* (Commentary), by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî).

The Prophet is commanded here to carry on a jihad against disbelievers as well as hypocrites. Hence the only significance that can be attached to these words is that he must continue to preach forcibly both to the disbelievers and the hypocrites.

74a. They were in secret alliance with the enemies of Islâm and did their best to put an end to the life of the Prophet and bring about the extirpation of Islâm.

74b. The advent of the Muslims in Madînah had enriched its inhabitants. Was it not, then, a matter for wonder that those men who had gained by Islâm should turn against their very benefactors?

75 And of them are those who made a covenant with Allâh: If He give us out of His grace, we will certainly give alms and be of the righteous.

76 But when He gave them out of His grace, they became niggardly of it and they turned away and they are averse.

77 So He requited them with hypocrisy in their hearts till the day when they meet Him, because they broke their promise with Allâh and because they lied.

78 Know they not that Allâh know their hidden thoughts and their secret counsels, and that Allâh is the great Knower of the unseen things?

79 Those who taunt the free givers of alms among the believers as well as those who cannot find anything (to give) but with their hard labour — they scoff at them. Allâh will pay them back their mockery; and for them is a painful chastisement.^a

80 Ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them. Even if you ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allâh will not forgive them. This is because they disbelieve in Allâh and His Messenger. And Allâh guides not the transgressing people.^a

79a. When subscriptions were raised for the expedition to Tabûk, the wealthier members of the Muslim community gave large donations, while the poorer ones, the labourers, also paid their mite out of their hard earnings. The hypocrites taunted both, the former as making a show of their wealth, the latter as bringing in their small subscriptions only to be counted among the subscribers. For Allâh's paying them back their mockery, see 2:15a.

SECTION 11: The Hypocrites

81 Those who were left behind were glad on account of their sitting behind Allâh's Messenger, and they were averse to striving in Allâh's way with their property and their persons, and said: Go not forth in the heat. Say: The Fire of hell is fiercer in heat. If only they could understand!

82 Then let them laugh a little and weep much — a recompense for what they earned.

83 So if Allâh bring you back to a party of them, then they ask your permission to go forth, say: Never shall you go forth with me and never shall you fight an enemy with me. You chose to sit (at home) the first time; so sit (now) with those who remain behind.^a

80a. Devotional relations with the hypocrites were henceforth cut off. The mention of *seventy* may not indicate the specific number here. For this use of the word see 2:29b. It, however, appears that the Holy Prophet took it literally at the burial service of ‘Abd Allâh ibn Ubayy, the recognized leader of the hypocrites. When ‘Abd Allâh ibn Ubayy died the Holy Prophet was asked to conduct the burial service. The Holy Prophet got up, but ‘Umar took hold of his garment and objected on the ground that ‘Abd Allâh was a hypocrite, and referred to his hostile attitude throughout his life. The Holy Prophet replied that Allâh had given him a choice (referring to the words of this verse: *Ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them*), and that he would ask forgiveness for him for over seventy times, if only by his doing so, forgiveness could be extended to the dead man. Then he offered prayers for him. Verse 84 is said to have been revealed then to stop the offering of prayers for those who were known to be hypocrites (Bukhârî 23:84).

The incident shows how kind and forgiving the Holy Prophet was to his severest enemies. ‘Abd Allâh ibn Ubayy was the man who had led the hypocrite movement against him the whole of his life, and thus was not only one of his worst enemies, but at the same time a most dangerous one, because he was aware of all the movements of the Muslims and deceived them at the most critical moments. Yet the Holy Prophet forgave him entirely.

83a. It should be noted that this is the only punishment given to the hypocrites, viz., that they were not allowed to take part in future expeditions against the enemies of the Muslims. It is also related that from one of them, Tha‘labah, whose story is referred to by the commentators under verse 75, the Holy Prophet and the three Caliphs who followed him refused to accept the poor-rate. Verse 103 leads us to the same conclusion; see 103a. These were the only disadvantages, if it is right to call them so, which the hypocrites suffered. They were not looked upon as members of the Muslim community, but, as citizens, they enjoyed all the rights of other citizens.

84 And never offer prayer for anyone of them who die, nor stand by his grave. Surely they disbelieved in Allâh and His Messenger and they died in transgression.^a

85 And let not their wealth and their children excite thy admiration. Allâh only intends to chastise them thereby in this world, and (that) their *nafs* may depart while they are disbelievers.

86 And when a chapter is revealed, saying, believe in Allâh and strive hard along with His Messenger, the wealthy among them ask permission of you and say: Leave us (behind) that we may be with those who sit (at home).

87 They prefer to be with those who remain behind, and their hearts are sealed so they understand not.

88 But the Messenger and those who believe with him strive hard with their property and their persons. And these it is for whom are the good things and these it is who are successful.

84a. The Prophet is now told that, though they professed Islâm outwardly, they were disbelievers at heart, and the burial service, which was only for the Muslims, should not be extended to them. But it should be noted that the Prophet was now informed through Divine revelation that they were really disbelievers. It is, further, clear from the words of this verse that those who were known to be hypocrites were not fought against but lived to die a natural death. The case of ‘Abd Allâh ibn Ubayy, who died in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, and that of Tha‘labah, who died in the reign of ‘Uthmân, are sufficient to prove this, while there is not a single case on record of any one of them having been put to death.

Standing by the grave refers to the Prophet’s practice of praying for the deceased standing by his grave after the burial.

89 Allâh has prepared for them Gardens wherein flow rivers, to abide therein. That is the great achievement.

SECTION 12: **The Hypocrites**

90 And the defaulters^a from among the dwellers of the desert^b came that permission might be given to them, and they sat (at home) who lied to Allâh and His Messenger. A painful chastisement will afflict those of them who disbelieve.

91 No blame lies on the weak or on the sick, or on those who can find nothing to spend, if they are sincere to Allâh and His Messenger. There is no way (to blame) against the doers of good. And Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful —

92 Nor on those to whom, when they came to thee that you should mount them, you did say: I cannot find that on which to mount you.^a They went back while their eyes overflowed with tears of grief that they could not find aught to spend.

93 The way (to blame) is only against those who ask permission of you, though they are rich. They have chosen to be with those who remained behind; and Allâh has sealed their hearts, so they know not.

90a. The word *mu'adhdhir* is the nominative form of *'adhdhara*, meaning *he was remiss, wanting, deficient in an affair, setting up an excuse for it* (*Lisân al-'Arab* (Dictionary), by 'Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram).

90b. *Al-A'râb* is a collective general noun, said by Az to be plural of *a'râbî* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), signifying *the dwellers of the desert (of Arabia), who move from place to place in search of herbage and water, whether of Arabs or their freemen*, as distinguished from *'Arab*, which signifies *those whose descent can be traced to Arabs* (*Lisân al-'Arab* (Dictionary), by 'Allâmah Abu-l-Faḍl Jamâl al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Mukarram).

92a. Apparently, what they wanted to join the expedition, and what the Prophet could not find for them, were *beasts* to ride upon and to carry their provisions and necessities.

Part 11

94 They will make excuses to you when you return to them. Say: Make no excuse, we shall not believe you; Allâh has informed us of matters relating to you. And Allâh and His Messenger will now see your actions, then you will be brought back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, then He will inform you of what you did.^a

95 They will swear by Allâh to you, when you return to them, so that you may leave them alone. So leave them alone. Surely they are unclean and their refuge is hell — a recompense for what they earned.^a

96 They will swear to you that you may be pleased with them. But if you are pleased with them, yet surely Allâh is not pleased with the transgressing people.

97 The dwellers of the desert are hardest in disbelief and hypocrisy, and most disposed not to know the limits of what Allâh has revealed to His Messenger. And Allâh is Knowing, Wise.

94a. Evidently these verses were revealed when the Prophet was away from Madînah, and the statements made in them are therefore prophetical, being exactly fulfilled on his return.

95a. It is related that on his return from Tabûk, the Holy Prophet forbade the Muslims to have any intercourse with the hypocrites. This injunction was in obedience to the revelation which he had received during the journey, as is clearly shown in verses 83, 84.

98 And of the dwellers of the desert are those who take what they spend to be a fine, and they wait for an evil turn of fortune for you. On them is the evil turn. And Allâh is Hearing, Knowing.^a

99 And of the desert Arabs are those who believe in Allâh and the Last Day, and consider what they spend and the prayers of the Messenger, as bringing them nearer to Allâh. Surely they bring them nearer (to Allâh); Allâh will bring them into His mercy. Surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.

SECTION 13: The Hypocrites

100 And the foremost, the first of the Emigrants and the Helpers,^a and those who followed them in goodness — Allâh is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them Gardens wherein flow rivers, abiding therein for ever. That is the mighty achievement.

98a. The hypocrites had to contribute something for the sake of appearance; they also paid the poor-rate so that they might be treated as Muslims.

Dâ'irah (pl. *dawâ'ir*) means *circuit*, and *a calamity* is so called because it encompasses a man on all sides; or it signifies *a turn of fortune*, from *dâra*, meaning *it turned*. *Dâ'irat al-sau'* is *the calamity which befalls and destroys* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). It is a prophetical announcement.

100a. *Muhâjirîn* is plural of *muhâjir*, meaning literally *one who flees from or forsakes his home*, and *ansâr* is plural of *nâsir*, meaning *one who helps*. In the history of Islâm, the former word came to signify all those companions of the Holy Prophet who, having embraced Islam at Makkah, had to flee from their homes either to Abyssinia or

to Madînah; the latter flight, including nearly all the Makkan Muslims, is known as *the Flight*, and the Muslim era dates from it. *Anṣâr* signifies the Madînah Muslims who, having accepted Islâm before the Flight, gave shelter to those who fled from Makkah. By “those who followed them in goodness” are meant the Muslims who came after the companions and followed their good deeds.

101 And of those around you of the desert Arabs, there are hypocrites; and of the people of Madînah (also) — they persist in hypocrisy. You know them not;^a We know them. We will chastise them twice,^b then they will be turned back to a grievous chastisement.

102 And others have acknowledged their faults^a — they mixed a good deed with another that was evil. It may be that Allâh will turn to them (mercifully). Surely Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.

103 Take alms out of their property — you would cleanse them and purify them thereby — and pray for them. Surely your prayer is a relief to them. And Allâh is Hearing, Knowing.^a

104 Know they not that Allâh is He Who accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms, and that Allâh — He is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful?

101a. The insincerity of the heart could not be known to a mortal — it is known only to Allâh. Events had, however, come to pass which ultimately separated the hypocrites from the Muslims after they had been mingled with them for a long time.

101b. The hypocrites were punished twice in this life. They had to take part in all contributions for the defence of the Muslim community and had to pay the poor-rate, all this against their conviction and unwillingly, and this was, no doubt, a source of great torment to them. After having suffered all this torment for the sake of being reckoned Muslims, they were ultimately separated from the Muslims, for it is reported that the Holy Prophet named them while addressing a congregation in the Friday prayers, and they had to leave the assembly in the sight of the whole congregation, and this exposure to public shame was no doubt a great punishment for them.

102a. According to different reports, the number of these men varied from three to ten. They were sincere and acknowledged their fault.

103a. Because they showed sincerity in confessing their faults, they were dealt with leniently. Their alms were not to be rejected. The Prophet’s acceptance of alms from

them is here spoken of as purifying them of evil, while his prayer for them is described as bringing peace and quiet to them.

105 And say, Work; so Allâh will see your work and (so will) His Messenger and the believers. And you will be brought back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, then He will inform you of what you did.

106 And others are made to await Allâh's command, whether He chastise them or turn to them (mercifully). And Allâh is Knowing, Wise.^a

107 And those who built a mosque to cause harm (to Islâm) and (to help) disbelief, and to cause disunion among the believers, and a refuge for him who made war against Allâh and His Messenger before. And they will certainly swear: We desired naught but good. And Allâh bears witness that they are certainly liars.^a

108 Never stand in it. Certainly a mosque founded on observance of duty from the first day is more deserving that you should stand in it. In it are men who love to purify themselves. And Allâh loves those who purify themselves.^a

106a. This is generally supposed to refer to three of the believers, who held back from the expedition, viz. Ka'b ibn Malik, Halâl ibn Umayyah and Murârah ibn Rabî' (Bukhârî 64:81). But some think that it refers to the hypocrites generally.

107a. According to 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Abbâs (Companion) and other commentators, twelve men from among the hypocrites of the tribe of Banî Ghnam built a mosque at the instigation of Abû 'Amir in the neighbourhood of the mosque of Qubâ', with the object of causing harm to that mosque. Abû 'Amir, who after fighting against the Holy Prophet for a long time, had fled to Syria after the battle of Hunain, had written to his friends at Madînah that he was coming with a formidable army to crush the Prophet, and that they should build a mosque for him. But Abû 'Amir died in Syria, and the founders desired the Holy Prophet to give it a blessing by his presence, which he was forbidden to do by Divine revelation, and the mosque was demolished (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân al-Undlusî).

108a. Some commentators understand by this the mosque at Qubâ', while the greater number regard the Prophet's mosque at Madînah as being meant here. The words are general and every mosque raised for the service of Allâh may be included in this description.

109 Is he, then, who lays his foundation on duty to Allâh and (His) good pleasure better, or he who lays his foundation on the edge of a cracking hollowed bank, so it broke down with him into the Fire of hell? And Allâh guides not the unjust people.

110 The building which they have built will ever continue to be a source of disquiet in their hearts, unless their hearts is torn to pieces. And Allâh is Knowing, Wise.^a

SECTION 14: **The Faithful**

111 Surely Allâh has bought from the believers their persons and their property — theirs (in return) is the Garden. They fight in Allâh's way, so they slay and are slain. It is a promise which is binding on Him in the *Taurât* and the *Injîl* and the Qur'ân.^a And who is more faithful to his promise than Allâh? Rejoice therefore in your bargain which you have made. And that is the mighty achievement.

110a. Their hearts could be torn to pieces by severe regret or by sincere repentance.

111a. The promise which is said to be binding on Allâh, as laid down in the Qur'ân, as well as in the previous books, is this, *that Allâh will grant the believers His blessings, if they exert themselves with their persons and their property in His way*: "Allâh has bought from the believers their persons and their property — theirs (in return) is the Garden". The Gospels give the same promise: "If thou wilt be perfect," said Jesus to a wealthy man, "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew. 19:21). "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" said Peter. Jesus' reply was: "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew 19:27–29). Moses' teaching contains similar promises. For instance, the promise of God, "that ye may increase mightily ... in the land that floweth with milk and honey," is made conditional on "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:3–5), which is the same as exerting oneself to one's utmost in the way of God with one's person and property. It should be borne in mind that the words *they fight in Allâh's way, so they slay and are slain*, are not a part of the promise, but are expressive of the condition of the Companions, and show that they were true to their promise. The promise to spend one's person and property may be

carried out in various ways under different circumstances, and the Companions of the Holy Prophet were as true to this promise during the thirteen years at Makkah as during the ten years at Madînah.

112 They who turn (to Allâh), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of Allâh — and give good news to the believers.

113 It is not for the Prophet and those who believe to ask forgiveness for the polytheists, even though they should be near relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are companions of the flaming fire.^a

114 And Ibrâhîm's asking forgiveness for his sire was only owing to a promise which he had made to him; but when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allâh, he dissociated himself from him. Surely Ibrâhîm was tender-hearted, forbearing.

115 And it is not (attributable to) Allâh that He should lead a people astray after He has guided them, so far so that He makes clear to them what they should guard against. Surely Allâh is Knower of all things.^a

113a. It should be noted that this verse does not prohibit praying for the forgiveness of the disbelievers in general, but only such disbelievers about whom it became clear that they were doomed to the Fire. The commentators are generally of opinion that either a revelation from Allâh with regard to a person or his death in disbelief or idolatry alone settles the point. When the Prophet was asked to pray for the destruction of a people who were fighting against him, he prayed thus: "My Lord, forgive them because they know not". So long as a human being is alive, however hard he may be in his disbelief; it is not forbidden to pray for his forgiveness or guidance. But when he is dead, God will deal with him as He pleases, and He is the most Merciful of all merciful ones. According to a hadîth, after all intercessions have taken place, the Most Merciful of all will take a handful — and the handful with Allâh is as vast as the *samâwât* and the earth (39:67) — out of hell and throw them into the river of Life, and these would be the people who never did any good (Bukhârî 98:24). But under this verse the burial service, which is a prayer for forgiveness, is held only for Muslims, and not for those who die in disbelief.

116 Surely Allâh's is the kingdom of the *samâwât* and the earth. He gives life and causes death. And besides Allâh you have neither friend nor helper.

117 Certainly Allâh has turned in mercy to the Prophet and the Emigrants and the Helpers who followed him in the hour of hardship, after the hearts of a part of them were about to deviate; then He turned to them in mercy.^a Surely to them He is Compassionate, Merciful;

118 And (He turned in mercy) to the three who were left behind; until the earth, vast as it is, became strait to them and their *nafs* were also straitened to them; and they knew that there was no refuge from Allâh but in Him. Then He turned to them in mercy that they might turn (to Him). Surely Allâh — He is the Oftreturning to mercy, the Merciful.^a

115a. The verse establishes in clear words that Allâh never leads a people astray; and how could He lead astray, says the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân, when He it is Who gives them guidance, and makes clear to them the evils they should guard against?

117a. *Taubah* on the part of Allâh means His turning to His servant and changing one state to another which is higher than it. The context, in fact, throws clear light upon the meaning of *taubah*, for Allâh's turning mercifully is in relation to the Prophet and those sincere believers who are plainly stated to have followed the Prophet in the hour of straitness, thus showing that it was in relation to those who were obedient under the severest difficulties and not to those who were disobedient; the latter being dealt with in the next verse. The expedition to Tabûk is known as the *ghazwat al-'usrah* or *the expedition of straitness*, because of the excessive heat, and scarcity of food and water and the hardships of the long journey with scanty means. Really the whole period of about twenty-one years from the preaching of the Prophet had been one of the severest difficulties for the Muslims. The party whose hearts were about to deviate is referred to in the next verse.

118a. The three men were from among the *Anṣâr*, whose names have already been given in 106a. The words *were left behind* are explained as meaning either *left behind at the time of the expedition* or *left behind with respect to the commandment of Allâh concerning them*, being, it is said, the persons referred to in verse 106: "And others are made to await Allâh's command, whether He chastise them or turn to them mercifully". The latter explanation was given by Ka'b himself, one of the three men (*Bahr al-Muhîṭ* (Commentary), by Imâm Athîr al-Dîn Abû 'Abd Allâh Abû Hayyân

al-Undlusî). They remained cut off from all intercourse with the Muslims for fifty days. Ka‘b was a man of importance, and when he received a letter from the king of Ghassân, offering him a position under him if he deserted the Prophet, he burned the letter, showing his contempt for the offer, and gave no reply (Ibn Hishâm).

SECTION 15: What the Faithful should do

119 O you who believe, keep your duty to Allâh and be with the truthful.

120 It was not proper for the people of Madînah and those round about them of the desert Arabs to remain behind the Messenger of Allâh, nor to prefer their own lives to his life.^a That is because there afflicts them neither thirst nor fatigue nor hunger in Allâh’s way, nor tread they a path which enrages the disbelievers, nor cause they any harm to an enemy,^b but a good work is written down for them on account of it. Surely Allâh wastes not the reward of the doers of good;

121 Nor spend they anything, small or great, nor do they traverse a valley but it is written down for them, that Allâh may reward them for the best of what they did.

122 And the believers should not go forth all together. Why, then, does not a company from every party from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion,^a and that they may warn their people, when they come back to them, that they may be cautious?

120a. The meaning is that they should neither desire rest for themselves, or comfort, or protection, in preference to the Prophet; in other words, they should accompany him in difficulty and distress.

120b. *Nâla min-hu* means *he harmed him*; *nâla min ‘uduwwi-hî*, *he attained the object of his desire from the enemy* (Arabic-English Lexicon by Edward William Lane).

SECTION 16: The Prophet’s Great Anxiety

123 O you who believe, fight those of the disbelievers who are near to You^a and let them find firmness in you.^b And know that Allâh is with those who keep their duty.

124 And whenever a chapter is revealed, there are some of them who say: Which of you has it strengthened in faith? So as for those who believe, it strengthens them in faith and they rejoice.

125 And as for those in whose hearts is a disease, it adds uncleanness to their uncleanness, and they die while they are disbelievers.^a

126 See they not that they are tried once or twice in every year, yet they repent not, nor do they mind.^a

122a. The introduction here of the subject of the study of religion shows the aim which the Qur'ân has in view. In the midst of the ordinances relating to fighting, it introduces the subject of the preparation of a missionary force, thus showing that this was the greatest necessity of Islâm. It was only by means of a missionary effort that truth could be spread, and the ultimate object was not to be lost sight of, even when the community was engaged in a life-and-death struggle against overwhelming forces of the enemy.

123a. Because it was they who persecuted the Muslims. The object was to stop persecutions.

123b. So that you do not yield to them.

125a. The uncleanness of their hearts increased with new revelation, because it increased them in stubbornness, and their hearts were more and more hardened against truth.

126a. These trials consisted of the expeditions which the Muslims had to undertake every now and then, and in which the hypocrites were distinguished from the true believers.

127 And whenever a chapter is revealed, they look one at another: Does anyone see you? Then they turn away. Allâh has turned away their hearts because they are a people who understand not.

128 Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves; grievous to him is your falling into distress, most solicitous for you, to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful.^a

129 But if they turn away, say: Allâh is sufficient for me — there is no deity but He. On Him do I rely, and He is the *Rabb* of the mighty Throne.

128a. This is the true picture of the heart which grieved, not for his followers alone, not for one tribe or country, but for all humanity. He grieves for the burdens of all, and he is solicitous for the welfare of all. That the whole of humanity is meant here is

shown by the concluding words. There is a special relation he bears to those who follow him; to them he is, in addition, compassionate and merciful.